

ER-7-2686

27 July 1955

alice *at*
Helen *HA*

John F. Simmons Esq.
Chief of Protocol
Department of State
Washington 25, D. C.

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Dear Jack:

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I enclose a copy of a letter that I received from Bob Blum, an old friend of mine, who is the head of the Asia Foundation in San Francisco. I would be glad to tell you personally a little more about this Foundation if you were interested.

The question that Bob Blum raises in his letter is not at all within my competence, and I merely pass it on to you for any consideration you may consider appropriate.

I realize the problem involved in keeping track of all our distinguished visitors who, in addition to their formal visits, desire to travel around the country. Possibly there is no adequate solution for this problem.

Faithfully yours,

SIGNED

Allen W. Dulles
Director

Encl.

AWD:at

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State

July 22, 1955

Dear Allen:

I am sending to your associates full reports on my conversations with Prime Minister U Nu of Burma and on the work done by The Asia Foundation in arranging his visit to the San Francisco area where he spent two and a half days from July 13th to 16th. I saw a good deal of him during that time and was happy to find that he was very cordial to our organization and the work we are doing in Burma. You may wish to glance over the two reports on my conversations and on the arrangements we made that I have forwarded separately.

In effect, The Asia Foundation had almost full responsibility for making the arrangements for the Prime Minister's visit in this area. This came about because (1) the Burmese Embassy asked us to help, (2) the State Department took almost no responsibility for the visit, (3) we were glad to help and once we started making the arrangements our responsibilities multiplied and we could not let go.

I was delighted that we were able to do this. On the other hand, this experience convinced me that the State Department was not shouldering as much responsibility as it should in connection with distinguished foreign visitors. I was told by James Barrington, the Burmese Ambassador, that the "official visit" of the Prime Minister covered only the three or four days in New York and Washington. For the rest of the time, the Burmese party was on its own and had to make the arrangements as best it could. Thus, in their visits to Detroit, Knoxville, Arizona, Southern California and San Francisco they were completely dependent on such local interest, initiative and organizing ability as might be available. The Burmese party felt, I believe, that the visit to San Francisco went very well. I know that they did not have the same opinion about some of the other arrangements. If it went well here, it is simply because we had the means and the desire to step in and handle the whole thing in consultation with the Burmese Embassy, including hotel reservations, airport reception, lunches, visits, secretarial assistance, arrangements with local authorities, etc.

There were several Government officials accompanying the party including a State Department security officer, a State Department desk officer and some USIA people. But they took no responsibility whatsoever for the arrangements and were apparently not expected to. This is also true of the State Department's Reception Center in San Francisco.

It seems to me that such a system is quite indefensible. There are just too many opportunities for things to go wrong and it requires real dedication, time and resources to have everything work out properly. I know that Ambassador Barrington was unhappy about the whole thing, not because things worked out badly -- which was not the case -- but as he told me, "after all, U Nu is a Chief of Government and it should be an official responsibility to make arrangements during his visit to this country". The present system, as Barrington put it mildly, is an "untidy" one.

Let me give you small examples. The Manager of the San Francisco Airport would not give permission for cars for the Prime Minister's party to go on the airfield to receive the party on its arrival until I called Simmons in Washington and he said permission should be granted. On departure, however, permission for the cars to drive on the field was refused. Also, at the departure from the continental United States, not one Federal, State or City official was present except for the junior persons from Washington mentioned above.

If I write to you directly on this, it is because I do not think the prestige or the interest of the United States is well served by the present system. I am delighted that The Asia Foundation was able to do what it did and we are prepared to do the same again, but I would feel much more comfortable if there were some kind of official State Department sponsorship of the arrangements. The assistance and participation of local groups is necessary, but the Government should retain overall responsibility the entire time the visitor is in this country.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Bob